

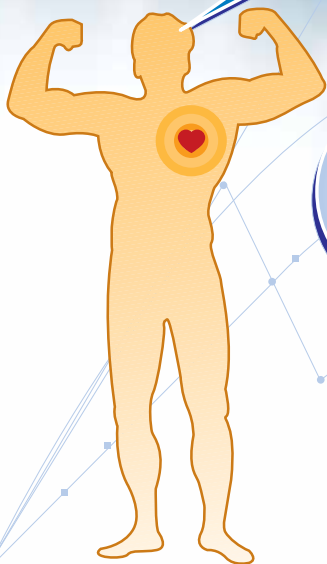
10 Well@Pfizer

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Your Quarterly guide to heart health



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**SO, HOW
WELL
ARE YOU?**



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SO, HOW WELL ARE YOU?

If you ask three different people to define wellness, you are likely to get three different answers. Many define wellness as being fit, being healthy or even being thin. But wellness is a term that encompasses a range of things – so the question becomes how do you define wellness for yourself! An obvious place to start, is with existing concepts of wellness.

The Absence of Disease

A basic definition of wellness is that it is the opposite of illness. In this light, then, wellness is related to physical health and your perception of your physical health. Some people who have a health condition such as heart disease may define themselves as unwell; others, usually those who are managing the condition, may accept that they have heart disease but still consider themselves well. You can have a health condition but still be happy and healthy. One way to change your feeling of wellness is to change the way you perceive your illness and your relationship with it. By redefining it you can make something positive out of something you perceive as negative.

A Feeling of Well-being

Some people equate wellness with happiness. This links wellness to a person's mental state and essentially says, "if I feel well, I am well." Your mental health has a very real impact on your physical health, and vice versa, which is why it is so important to obtain a balance between both. One of the most common ways in which we express our mental state is through our relationship with food.

How often have you reached for an extra biscuit or bought a chocolate on the way home from work because you had a bad day? Your mental state triggers a physical response, a craving, and you in turn soothe your emotional turmoil by medicating your physical body with food. Wellness can then be seen as an expression of your mental well-being. One way to improve your mental health is to practice positive self-talk. Self-talk is your internal dialogue with yourself. Practice encouraging yourself rather than pulling yourself down.



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A Healthy Body

Another definition of wellness equates it with fitness. Thus if you eat well, exercise regularly, drink lots of water and do all the other things you know are good for your body, you will begin your journey towards living in wellness. The trick here is to define fitness for you. Not every person is destined to be a size 6 supermodel or a buff male hunk. If you define fitness as wellness and set your standards according to unrealistic models you will never achieve wellness. Setting realistic goals that are specific, measurable and scheduled is one way to work towards being a healthier, fitter you.

Rather than saying you want to lose weight, say you want to lose 5kg within the next two months by exercising three times a week at the gym.

Spiritual Wellness

Whether you are a devout church-goer, a spiritualist in the broader sense or someone who does not believe, wellness can also be linked to the inner you, your spirit. By nurturing your spirit you also nurture your body and mind. One way to nurture your spirit is to make an appointment with yourself every day.

This means scheduling time just for you and using that time to do something that inspires or relaxes you. Take that scrapbooking class, run a bath complete with bath salts, candles and your favourite CD, or read that novel you've been dying to get into.

Proactive not Reactive

Anne Edsol of the University of Maryland, Baltimore County's (UMBC) Counselling Centre defines wellness as "something that you are doing that is proactive, positive choices that you are making that make you healthy." This definition sees you as the actor in your own well-being, it gives you the control to define your own wellness and to act to make changes to improve your wellness. By taking control of your life in this way, you can immediately experience a renewed sense of wellness because you are in the driver's seat of your life. Whether you think of wellness as the absence of illness, the physical expression of your mental state or just being fit, playing a role in your wellness will have a positive impact. Being heart-healthy means looking at your whole self and determining how you can recreate a well person – mind, body and spirit.¹

Skills for Coping with Stress: Negotiating Skills



"... I'd like to make more mistakes next time. I'd relax. ... I would take fewer things seriously. ... I would perhaps have more actual troubles, but I'd have fewer imaginary ones...." said Nadine Stair, 86 years old.

If you (and most of us) are living your life, like Nadine, from one crisis to the next instead of truly living it, you probably need to learn to better cope with stress. Often stress is a symptom of perceived loss of control. Learning how to negotiate with people is one way of coping with stress. Negotiation isn't about learning to win so that the other person loses; it's about both people feeling as though they have won.^{2a}

So here are a few tips for improving your negotiation skills:

- 1.** Know what you want to achieve: Whether it's a raise or a tidy bathroom after your significant other takes a shower, knowing what you want to achieve can help the negotiation run more smoothly.
- 2.** Be prepared to compromise: There is more than one way to reach the same goal; the trick is to find the one that works for both of you.
- 3.** Adopt a co-operative rather than a confrontational approach: No-one likes to be attacked, so approach the other person in a friendly way. Make it clear you want to find a plan that works for both of you.
- 4.** Use "I" language rather than "You" language: This is linked to your approach. In personal relationships in particular, many people phrase their request as an accusation. "You always leave the towels on the floor." By taking the emphasis off the other person, you allow them to feel safer and more open. For example, you could say, "I would really appreciate it if we could find some way to keep the bathroom tidy. I'm willing to take responsibility for the basin area and cabinet. Could you ensure the towels are hung up and the bath clean?"

Sidebar: Do's and Don'ts for Negotiation

DO

- Define what is negotiable beforehand
- Choose an appropriate time to raise the issue: a heated argument is not the time to attempt negotiation
- State your case clearly and concisely
- Research the context of your argument
- Listen to what the other person has to say and acknowledge their feelings
- Restate your case in different terms and relate it to the other person's point of view
- Accept the shared decision once an acceptable compromise has been reached

DON'T

- Complicate things
- Stubbornly refuse to hear what the other person has to say
- Use accusatory language
- Go back on a compromise once you have accepted it^{2b}



Playing a meaningful role in your community

Being proactive in your community can help you achieve a level of involvement that can benefit your sense of wellness. But how do you become involved? What organisations are in your area and what do they need?

Aardvark Press' useful series of books "How2Help" provides you with all the information you need to find a worthwhile, sustainable project to help.

- ✓ Shelter
- ✓ Protection
- ✓ Nutrition
- ✓ Education
- ✓ Employment
- ✓ Realise Dreams

With Cape Town, Durban and Johannesburg versions of the book, the series aims to "highlight the needs and stories behind the many wonderful, easily-accessible development projects and worthy initiatives run on a volunteer basis by passionate South Africans."

The organisations featured in the books seek to provide underprivileged and previously disadvantaged communities and individuals with shelter, protection, nutrition, education, employment, and, most importantly, the opportunity to rise above their difficult circumstances and realise their dreams.

Authored by Tracey Young (Cape Town edition), the books are accessible and easy to use with complete details of the organisations and the stories behind them.

The publishers have committed to investing all profits made from the books into the projects featured in the books.

The How2Help website allows you to submit your own project information to the publishers and provide feedback on your experiences assisting these organisations. It also features a photo gallery. So grab a book and learn How2Help – it could change your life and someone else's.³

Be a Mentor

It's easy to become self-involved in this day and age. Fast food, fast cars, fast entertainment – the message is it's easy to get what you want when you want it, but few realise how much giving can do for you, as well as for the person receiving. Reaching out to another has a positive impact on the person doing the giving and is a wonderful way to reduce stress. Apart from community involvement, giving can include giving of your time and expertise.

One way to do this is to mentor another person. Perhaps you have a particular talent or experience in a particular industry. You could then mentor a younger or newer person in that industry and help them learn the ropes.

Mentorship is a growth experience – both for the person mentored and the mentor.

It gives you the opportunity to see the familiar with fresh eyes again. If you've ever said, "I wish someone had shown me how to do this sooner," you already recognise the value of mentorship.

Be the guiding hand that shapes the next generation of managers, painters, poets, gardeners, seamstresses – and reap the benefits for yourself.⁴



Could you do this - or maybe not?

One of the most difficult skills to master is that of learning to

ask for help and delegating to others. This is often tied to our feelings of self-worth. If you are uncertain of your capabilities, you may be afraid of allowing someone else to do your "job" in case they are better at it than you are. On the other hand, you may think that no one is capable of doing it except for you.

But letting go of this and allowing others to help you is unavoidable when you fall ill and can make the difference in your recovery. A healthy attitude towards illness is important, but it is equally vital that you are realistic. A weakened body cannot be the same as a healthy one. Acknowledging that and focusing your energy on recovering is more important than proving that "I can do it". Friends and family offer assistance during times of trial because they care and because they recognise that help is needed. So rather than sending them away or stubbornly continuing the way you always have, consider asking for help and freeing yourself up for what is most important: getting better.

Check-list: Organise Your Life

If you're daunted at the idea of organising your closet, let alone your life, don't despair. You can still take control and start organising your life. We've put together a checklist to help you on your way.

- 1. Define your goals for the future:** *Where do you want to be in two years, five years, ten years?*
- 2. Build quiet time into your schedule:** *Self-nurturing can help you identify areas you need to work on.*
- 3. Create balance in the different areas of your life:** *Look at your home life, your work life, your spiritual life and determine how you can feed all aspects of yourself while still meeting your obligations.*
- 4. Set boundaries and stick to them:** *No means no; don't be persuaded to change your mind.*
- 5. Invest in organisation equipment:** *If you need files for your financial records, buy some. Find systems that work for you. A whiteboard next to your PC might be more useful than a PDA.*
- 6. Delegate:** *Acknowledge that you can't do everything yourself and allow others to help you.*
- 7. Be grateful:** *Acknowledging what is working in your life can give you a greater feeling of control and help you to organise those aspects that still need work.*
- 8. Clear out the clutter:** *From your environment and your mind. Once you've organised your work and living space, start working on your thinking space.⁵*

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